the
Central Voice
CENTRAL PA'S LGBT NEWS SOURCE

HARRISBURG, YORK & LANCASTER FESTS PGS 20-23

Salman Rushdie: "...tell a good story" PG 11

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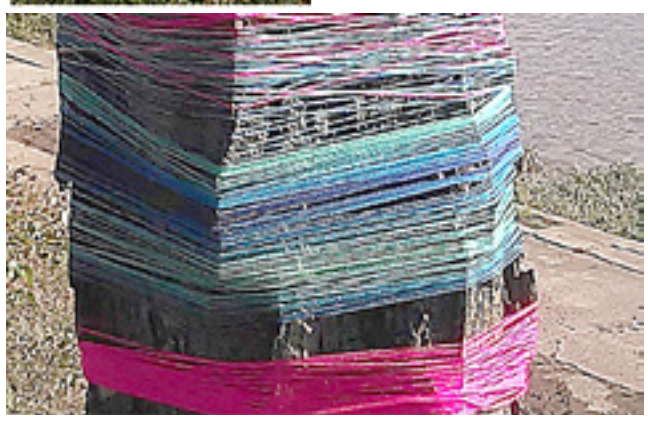
POP up ART

YARN BOMBING ALONG THE BANKS OF THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER

Voice's camera was on the lookout for art and found it in the most unlikely places.

See **WRAPPED UP**, page **19**



Not gay anymore

What's really behind conversion therapy

By Melinda Eash

The LGBT community and its allies have been hearing about reparation therapy, also known as conversion therapy, for years. Just recently, Milton S. Hershey students made headlines alleging that they were exposed to reparative therapy techniques.

The premise of conversion therapy is that you can change someone's sexual orientation or as the name suggests repair someone's sexual orientation as if it were broken. There are those who would have you believe that this is a legitimate form of therapy and that it works. Is this really true?

The first thing to understand about reparation therapy is that it suggests that there is something wrong with homosexuality.

Since 1975 the American Psychological Association has affirmed that homosexuality is not a mental disorder. The consensus of the health and mental health professionals is that homosexuality is a normal variation of sexual orientation. This is not to say that some people may be confused about their feelings and/or sexual orientation and seek therapy to work through their feelings. It is also true that members of the LGBT community seek therapy for the same reasons that straight people seek therapy.

Another myth not supported by scientific evidence is that people consciously choose their sexual orientation.

In reality sexual orientation is more complex than some people assume. Not everyone is purely straight or gay. Some people's sexual orientation has changed over their life time and others are truly bisexual. There is some scientific research to suggest differences in the brain between those who identify as homosexual and those who identify as heterosexual which suggests that sexual orientation is innate. Young children can know that their sexual orientation is different but not know how to label until they are somewhat older.

Why would anyone seek reparative therapy? Who wants to change their sexual orientation?

There are several reasons. Historically there has been considerable negativity associated with being any sexual orientation but straight. Homosexual or bisexual individuals have frequently felt pressured by their families and communities, especially certain religious communities to seek reparative therapy. If those around you are homophobic and you believe you

Please see **NOT GAY**, page **17**

THE FIRST THING TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT CONVERSION THERAPY IS THAT IT SUGGESTS THAT THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH HOMOSEXUALITY.

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INTERNATIONAL

UNITED KINGDOM

MUST INCLUDE GAY BAR, DEVELOPERS TOLD

The Queen speaks: Gay bars in London are closing down at such an "alarming" rate that the redevelopment of the Joiners Arms, an east London pub that counted Alexander McQueen, Rufus Wainwright and Wolfgang Tillmans among its regulars, will only get the go-ahead if it includes an LGBT club venue – and the mayor's office will send an inspector to make sure it is gay enough. It is believed to be the first time that the sexual orientation of a venue's customers has been included as a condition of planning approval.

CHURCH DEMANDS CONVERSION THERAPY BAN

The Church of England Synod calls for government to ban practice aiming to change sexual orientation after hearing experiences of 'spiritual abuse' in emotional debate, reports Religion correspondent Harriet Sherwood. The church's governing body overwhelmingly backed a motion saying conversion therapy had 'no place in the modern world'. The church has called on the government to ban conversion therapy and has condemned the practice, which aims to change sexual orientation, as unethical and potentially harmful.
Conversion therapy is usually described as an attempt to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Some churches in the C of E and other denominations have encouraged LGBT members to take part in prayer sessions and other activities to rid them of their "sin". One survey of the LGBT community indicates just under 40% of 553 respondents said they had undergone some form of conversion therapy.

GERMANY

MARRIAGE EQUALITY MEASURE PASSED

The vote in the Bundestag to pass Marriage Equality that took place around 3 a.m. New York time June 30 was 393 to 226 with 4 abstentions and 7 absences, reports Rex Wockner. Chancellor Angela Merkel voted 'No'. The measure goes now to the Bundesrat for a quick OK - a formality. Then to the President, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, for his signature. Germany will be the 23rd nation where same-sex couples can marry.

CONVICTIONS TO BE ANNULED FOR GAY MEN

Called "a late act of justice," German lawmakers have approved a plan to annul the convictions of thousands of gay men under a law criminalizing homosexuality that was enforced enthusiastically in post-World War II West Germany. "It is good that, for many homosexuals, the stigma of being criminal is finally being removed," said Volker Beck, a lawmaker with the opposition Greens and longtime campaigner for gay rights. "It is less good that this won't reach many, because they have died in the meantime." The legislation criminalizing homosexuality was introduced in the 19th century, toughened under Nazi rule and retained in that form even by democratic West Germany, which convicted some 50,000 men between 1949 and 1969. Homosexuality was decriminalized in 1969 but the legislation wasn't taken off the books entirely until 1994.

NETHERLANDS

TRUMP APPOINTS ANTI-GAY AMBASSADOR

Trump appointed gay rights opponent Pete Hoekstra, one of the Tea Party's founders, ambassador to Netherlands, first country to legalize gay marriage. Hoekstra once appeared in a campaign ad that was accused of being racist. He has claimed that refugees pose a threat to Europe. The Dutch newspaper *De Volkskrant* observed that Trump had "put a Dutchman in the Netherlands – but it is a Dutchman from the Netherlands of the 50s". Hoekstra, who represented Michigan's 2nd congressional district in the House of Representatives from 1993 to 2011, was born in the Netherlands but left when he was three years old. His nomination will need to be approved by the Dutch government and confirmed by the US Senate in order for him to take up the post.

ISRAEL

GAY COUPLES NOT ALLOWED TO ADOPT

In response to a High Court petition, the Israeli state said that it was opposed to allowing same-sex couples to adopt because it would place an "additional burden" on the child. "The professional opinion of the Child Welfare Services supports preserving the existing situation" that the adopting couple be a man and a woman, the government wrote to the court. This "takes into account the reality of Israeli society and the difficulty it may entail with regard to the child being adopted." Meretz's Michal Rozin, who heads the Knesset's LGBT lobby, Yael German of Yesh Atid, Merav Michaeli of the Zionist Union and Kulanu's Merav Ben Ari said in a statement that the decision was homophobic and showed the government's cynical use of the homosexual community. "This is a foolish and discriminatory decision that is accompanied by unprecedented homophobia," they said. "In English they boast about [being a gay-friendly country], but in Hebrew they deny basic rights."

ITALY

GONDOLIER ANNOUNCES HE IS TRANSGENDER

A gondolier, Alex Hai, who made headlines a decade ago for being the first woman to enter the male-dominated cadre of Venice's canal rowers has announced he is transgender. Hai won a legal battle in 2007 and became the first official female gondolier to row tourists around the lagoon city. He wrote on Facebook: "It is inaccurate to refer to me as 'she' or 'Alexandra' for any reason." In the online post, Hai said he had mastered rowing "while in the body of a woman." But he said he was not a woman "and the struggle of feminism is not my personal struggle. I simply want to do the work I'm passionate about."

SOUTH KOREA

DOZENS ARRESTED IN HOMOPHOBIC WITCH-HUNT

Speaking to CNN "Sergeant A" didn't want to give his real name, his exact rank or show his face. He said he was afraid the South Korean military would find out he was talking to the media. He faces charges for having sexual relations with another man, a crime within the South Korean military punishable by up to two years in prison. Sergeant A is part of a wider investigation which human rights groups are calling a homophobic witch-hunt, an accusation the military rejects. Homosexuality is not illegal for civilians in South Korea but human rights groups say the rights of sexual minorities are not always protected. Investigators visited Sergeant A in March -- telling him they knew he was gay and his ex-partner had already admitted their "crimes." The military penal code bans homosexual activity under Article 92-6 "to keep the military community sound."

TURKEY

TEAR GAS PREVENTS INSTANBUL'S PRIDE

While the US enjoyed uneventful Pride events all summer long, reports were that Turkish police prevented people from gathering in large numbers for Istanbul's LGBT Pride evert. Even so, small groups held ad hoc demonstrations despite a ban issued by the governor. For several years, Pride Week in Istanbul attracted tens of thousands of participants, making it one of largest gatherings celebrating LGBT rights and diversity in the Muslim world. That changed suddenly in 2015, when authorities, citing security concerns, banned gay and transgender pride events chasing away shocked participants trying to converge on central Taksim Square with tear gas and water cannons.

NATIONAL

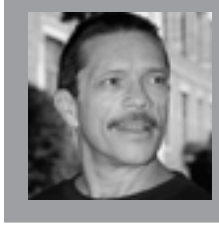
ARKANSAS'S UNEQUAL TREATMDENT THWARTED

Declaring "Obergefell is crystal clear: marriage is marriage, and equal is equal." The US Supreme court has overturned a decision of the Arkansas Supreme Court, in Pavan v. Smith, saying loud and clear that states may not treat same-sex married couples differently than other married couples,

Please see **POLITICAL UPDATES**, page **6**

Back to activist school?

Publisher's Voice



By Frank Pizzoli

With Fall here and schools opening doors again, is it time for us to go back to activist school? Or advocate or ally school or whatever activity sharpens your social justice pencil?

We're fond of calling situations "teachable moments". What about "learnable moments". Our never static world may occasionally require us to regroup.

With a retooling in mind (following our publication and web site redesign), this issue covers a number of phenomena in the world of "The Gay".

"Anatomy of a demonstration," about a local protest rally and march, examines how emotions simmer when expressing First Amendment rights.

"We're fond of calling situations teachable moments. What about learnable moments?"

In "What's happening in Chechnya?" Louie Marven takes a second, closer look at the dismal situation there for gay people, where there are no Pride Parades come Summer.

Under the Law and Justice Party attacks against LGBT Polish citizens are on the rise. A. Chaber, executive director of the Campaign Against Homophobia, explains how LGBT activists are trying to adapt.

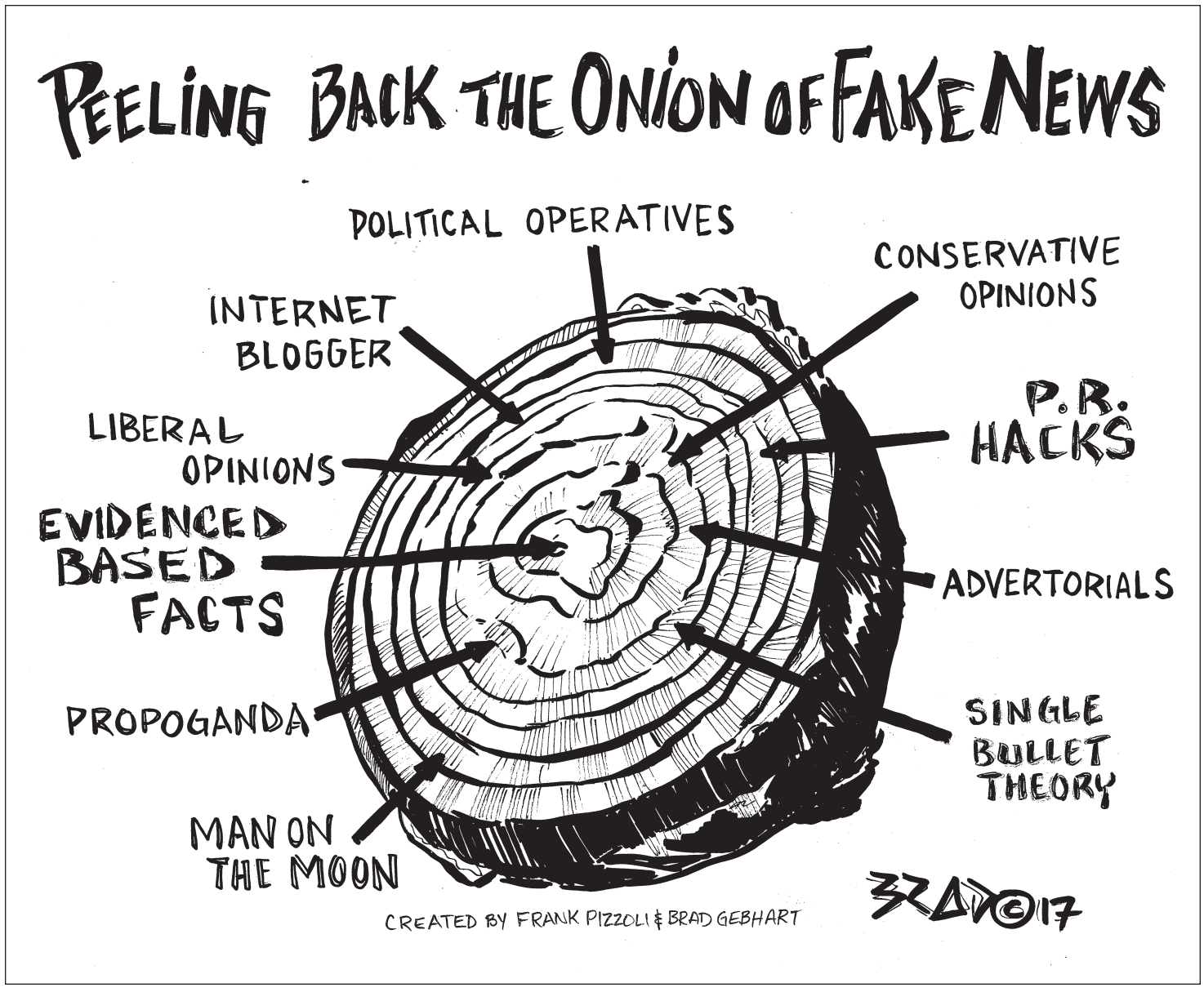
Religion, an important aspect of life for many LGBT individuals, gets some time center stage with a profile of Rev. Angela T. Jones-Ramirez in "A rebel busts loose and finds her way to the pulpit." She begins her tenure as Senior Pastor of Vision of Hope Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) about seven miles east of Lancaster City.

In "Ministering to the wholeness and holiness of LGBT Catholics" The Most Rev. Michael J. Scalzi, explains what the Parish of Saint Joseph has to offer Catholics and non-Catholics alike. It's not your parents' Catholic Church.

Psychologist Melinda Eash, well-known, longtime ally, unpacks the controversy surrounding Conversion Therapy in "Not gay anymore: What's really behind conversion therapy." The topic recently made local headlines for being both banned and, some claim, used in the hope of changing sexuality.

"Getting to know a Muslim" looks at the chaffed relationship between Muslim and gay communities. A local conference I attended helped me to better understand that not all Muslims think we're evil. "What goes on in your bedroom is between you and your god," said one Muslim fellow. Now if we can only get the American Taliban to understand that notion.

Finally, in our annual Pride Roundup Section, full of photographs of the region's three events plus photos from other Pennsylvania, New York, and international events, we are soberly reminded that our Brothers and Sisters in other parts of the world face violence and death. Police with tear gas and rubber bullets greeted many LGBT folks who wanted to be visible in the light of day. They need us. We need them to remain humble.



the Central Voice

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End horse racing's $2.7 billion taxpayer-funded windfall

Cutting wasteful subsidies must be part of budget balancing discussion

Submitted by
The Commonwealth Foundation

State government spends $800 million on taxpayer-funding giveaways to politically connected businesses each year, according to The Commonwealth Foundation. As lawmakers and Gov. Wolf debate ways to pay for the $32 billion spending plan passed last week, ending these wasteful subsidies must be at the top of their solutions list—and the horse racing industry's massive windfall should be first to go, the Foundation says.

Since 2006, state government has transferred an astonishing $2.7 billion of public money to the Race Horse Development Fund, which primarily funds prizes at race tracks.

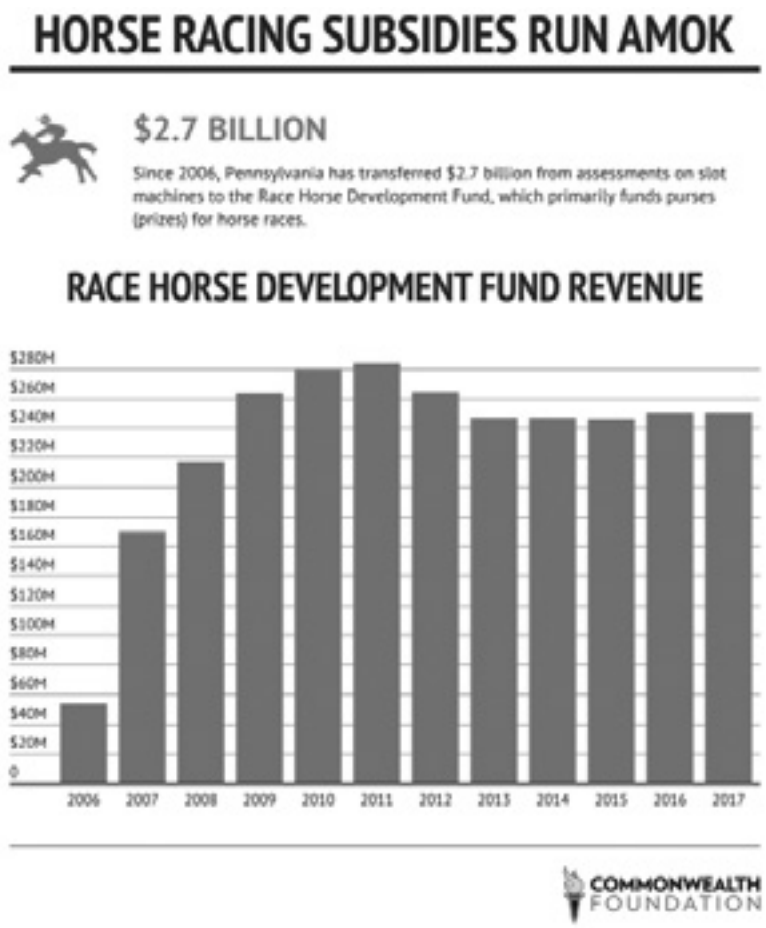
"Ending these outrageous subsidies for horse racing should be the first step toward balancing the budget," commented Nathan Benefield, vice president and COO for the Commonwealth Foundation. "Before considering any sort of tax increase, lawmakers should make sure existing revenue is spent on legitimate priorities."

Under current law, the state will send $250 million from assessments on slot machines to the Race Horse Development Fund this year—nearly one-third of the state's $800 million in corporate welfare spending. A Tribune-Review analysis found the bulk of the fund's prize money went to out-of-state horse owners, including at least $1 million to the multi-billionaire vice president of the United Arab Emirates.

Despite billions in subsidies, a Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board report shows the horse racing industry in decline

"State government has no business propping up the horse racing industry on the backs of taxpayers," continued Benefield. "Lawmakers and Gov. Wolf must reduce unfair corporate welfare spending before asking Pennsylvanians for one dollar more."

The Commonwealth Foundation transforms free-market ideas into public policies so all Pennsylvanians can flourish.



Voice Box

Notes from our readers

E-mail your thoughts to posops@aol.com

HUGELY HELPFUL

Thank you so much for your support of the LGBT Community Center of Central Pennsylvania. The service you provide has been hugely helpful to the center.
Megan E. Peterson, MS, FAB

FULFILLING

I just completed a 40 foot mural in Harrisburg under the auspices of Jump Street. My having been contacted for this was partially due to the story Central Voice published about my artistic work (March-April 20127, page 1). And for that I offer an endless 'thank you' because being involved in this project was one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life.
Artist Katie Trainer

THE CENTRAL VOICE DIGITAL

New website looks great!
Adrian Shanker, Founder & Executive Director
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center

EASIER

The new web site is cleaner and it's easier to see what is in the issue.
Anthony, a reader from Brooklyn

EXACTLY

Great job again on emphasizing exactly what I wanted to say!
http://www.thecentralvoice.com/stories/trumps-trans-military-ban,522?
Kai N. Kelly, President
TheSpectrumAlliance.org

Food for thought...

CAN'T HAPPEN HERE

In 2004, Philip Roth, author of *Portnoy's Complaint*, published *The Plot Against America.* He has said about his book that he never intended the story as a roman a clef on American politics. The book takes place in FDR's time. Recently he was asked if he still thought a 'plot' and takeover wasn't possible in the US. He replied in an email: "It is easier to comprehend the election of an imaginary President like Charles Lindbergh than an actual President like Donald Trump." Despite his Nazi leanings and racist proclivities, Lindbergh had "character and substance". "Trump is just a con artist," Roth said.

TIME WILL TELL

Steve Phillips, a Democratic civil rights lawyer and political activist, is author of *Brown Is the New White.* He firmly believes that the future of the Democratic Party lies in America's changing demographics - meaning the increasing numbers of African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans who are thought to form a progressive block of voters. Time will tell.

INDIVISIBLE BUT INVISIBLE?

Ezra Levin, co-founder of *Indivisible*, the resistance guide to President Donald Trumps election, says "Progressives don't have agenda-setting power…but we have the power to respond to any bad thing Congress or the administration" does. Locally, Rachel Marks told *The Central Voice* "Climate change will impact here and around the world." Along with about 450 other people, Mark is a member of Indivisible Hershey. Indivisible now has at least two groups in every congressional district in the US.

NO ANSWER IS AN ANSWER?

Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos recently was back in her hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, where she made herself available for questions from local students and the press. During a visit to Grand Rapids Community College, DeVos was asked if she would intervene if states offered vouchers to private schools that discriminated against LGBT students. She declined to answer or provide reassurance that taxpayer dollars would not be used to discriminate.

Former Voice columnist, running for Colorado senate

"Some of my earliest memories are of my mom pushing me in a stroller at marches and rallies supporting gay rights, women's rights, workers' rights, good schools, and a safe planet," Alan Kennedy-Shaffer says.

Now enrolled as a Ph.D. student at University of Colorado, Denver, Kennedy-Shaffer is running as a Democrat in Senate District 34. He is the first to file to succeed Sen. Lucia Guzman, who is term limited in 2018.

"We need progressive leaders who will fight for our rights," he says. "That is why I sued Trump and why I am running for the state senate. We are still fighting for justice for all, education for all, and healthcare for all."

Kennedy-Shaffer recently sued President Trump on behalf of Libyan student Zakaria Hagig to repeal the travel ban. He won. His co-counsel, Morgan Carroll, is chair of the Colorado Democratic Party. The victory made the *Denver Post, Washington Post,* and *New York Times.*

Kennedy-Shaffer is known locally as founder of Harrisburg Hope, a viable public venue through which public and elected officials addressed issues facing a financially challenged City of Harrisburg.

He is graduated from Yale University and William & Mary Law School.

Kennedy-Shaffer also wrote columns on Harrisburg Hope for *The Central Voice.*

Sweet goodbye

About 70 people passed through a June 30 open house at Harrisburg's LGBT Community Center bidding farewell to Louie Marven. He served as executive director for nearly half the nine years he worked at the center. Known throughout the region as a thoughtful, level-headed leader, he was often the silent magician behind the magic that took place in the community. Marven will be staying local and bringing his talents to The National Sexual Violence Resource Center, based in Harrisburg under the auspices of the PA Coalition Against Rape.

Getting to know a Muslim

"The clear message of 'Love for all. Hatred for none.' came across loud and clear," says *The Central Voice* editor and publisher Frank Pizzoli, (right) July 15 at an annual Muslim gathering with former Harrisburg resident Salaam Bhatti (left). On the day after the Pulse shooting, Bhatti flew to Orlando at his own expense to donate blood.

6,000 members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA assembled in Harrisburg to celebrate the 69th Jalsa Salana USA. The gathering also included an Interfaith Dinner to which Central Voice was an invited guest. This year's theme was Justice, Kindness and Kinship: An Islamic and American Imperative. The Jalsa Salana is an annual convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community worldwide. These conventions focus on establishing peace in the community. Also present for the evening was Harrisburg Mayor Eric Papenfuse.

Political Updates From page 3

including when it comes to issuing two-parent birth certificates to children born to same-sex spouses. Lambda Legal filed a friend-of-the-court brief in support of the same-sex families and praised the Court's action. "This decisive ruling is strong medicine for states and others that think they can resist the full equality due to same-sex couples and their children, mandated as the law of the land in the Supreme Court's landmark Obergefell decision issued exactly two years ago today," said Susan Sommer, Associate Legal Director and Director of Constitutional Litigation for Lambda Legal.

MCCLEOD-SKINNER RUNS FOR CONGRESS

Jamie McLeod-Skinner announced a run for the Democratic Party nomination in Oregon's expansive Congressional District 2. A lesbian, she is a former city manager, city planner, city councilor, wartime program manager in Kosovo, and Ashland High track alumna. Says McLeod-Skinner: "Government needs to know when to help, and when to get out of the way. Our region needs an active champion for rural communities and progressive solutions." McLeod-Skinner will focus on jobs, economic growth, and healthcare. She is the latest in a growing field of challengers competing for the Democratic Party nomination to challenge longtime incumbent Congressman Greg Walden. "While the incumbent is undermining our access to healthcare and failing to support local solutions, the race isn't about him. It's about honoring the sacrifices Oregonians make for their families and our country, she says." She is dedicated to discussing those concerns with as many voters as possible in person. From Grant's Pass to Pendleton, McLeod-Skinner is traveling the district every day and urging people to visit her along the way.

PENNSYLVANIA

BILL IMPROVES VETERAN SERVICES

State Reps. Jared Solomon, D-Phila., and Matt Gabler, R-Clearfield/Elk, are promoting H.B. 1231, legislation that would improve and support services for veterans across Pennsylvania. The bill awaits consideration by the House following unanimous adoption by the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee. "The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is already managing a registry that does a great job of engaging our servicemen and women by coordinating information on federal, state and local government benefits, programs and services that are available for them," Solomon said. "Unfortunately, the registry currently reaches less than 1 percent of our servicemen and women. House Bill 1231 would expand the registry's reach by bringing other agencies into the process of identifying veterans who stand to benefit." Currently, the DMVA's online registry lists roughly 7,000 of the over 894,000 veterans in Pennsylvania.

Take me out to the ballgame

The York Revolution hosted the York area's first LGBTQ Pride Night on Wednesday, June 14. The night featured a pre-game ceremony honoring local LGBTQ community leaders and advocates and LGBTQ members of the armed forces, a parade around the field featuring rainbow flags presented by Equality Fest, a proclamation presented by York Mayor Kim Bracey, performances by the Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus and UCC Open and Affirming Singers, and more.

Equality Fest Founder and President Carla Christopher said LGBTQ Pride Night welcomes York County LGBTQ community members "to be exactly who they were born to be" as they take in the fun of a Revolution game.

Bringing the AIDS epidemic out of the closet

Journalists remembered for barrier-breaking coverage during a time when gays lived in fear of being ostrasized or fired for being HIV positive

By Jillian Holness

The LGBT Community Center in Manhattan's Greenwich Village was filled with stories, laughs and a few tears on June 23 as current journalists honored editors and reporters who committed their careers to chronicling the AIDS epidemic, with some of them losing their battle to the disease. The Bodies on the Line memorial also marked the launch of the HIV Reporting Scholarship, to be known as The Kiki.

Anne-christine d'Adesky, an investigative journalist and documentary filmmaker who reported on the AIDS epidemic for various New York publications (including POZ), cohosted the event, which coincides with the 30th anniversary of ACT UP and AIDS activism. She also penned a memoir, published earlier this year and titled *The Pox Lover: An Activist's Decade in New York and Paris*.

"Many of these journalists were extraordinary because they pioneered what they were going to write about," d'Adesky said at the Center. "They pioneered how they were going to cover it, and often they themselves were struggling with or dying of AIDS."

After welcoming the audience, d'Adesky gave a brief lineup of the afternoon's program and introduced keynote speaker Samuel G. Freedman, a *New York Times* columnist and professor at Columbia University who paid tribute to his mentor and friend Jeff Schmalz, a writer and editor at *The New York Times* who died in 1993.

"Jeff was part of a really terrible period in the history of *The New York Times*," Freedman said, explaining that the so-called paper of record failed to cover the epidemic as it unfolded, in part because of the stigma and prejudice against the people who were getting sick.

Freedman said one of the first *New York Times* stories about the AIDS crisis was called "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals" and ran months late. What's worse, it wasn't until three years after the epidemic was widely known that an HIV story made it to the front page of the *Times*.

The subject was easier to overlook, Freedman said, because in the early '80s many gay people, including journalists, were still closeted. Those who were gay or had personal experiences with AIDS would not bring up the topic at work for fear of being ostracized or fired. Schmalz was outed as gay when he collapsed in the *Times* newsroom from an HIV-related seizure on December 21, 1990, and was later diagnosed with AIDS.

After months of treatment, Freedman said, Schmalz came back not only as the same talented and ambitious but also as someone with a righteous mission, who asked to cover the AIDS beat.

"No one had ever written the full human pageant of this epidemic," Freedman said. "Jeff caught that story at a moment where it was clear that [AIDS wasn't going to be] just a story of marginal people. It was beginning to invade the whole society."

Freedman said Schmalz's 35 AIDS articles seemed like a thousand because of the way he was able to bear witness for a diverse group of people living with the disease. "It became clear that every mainstream news

Please see **REMEMBERING**, page **9**

ALL FOR HEALTH
Let's remember that being healthy isn't a goal, it's a lifestyle.
So let's run a little faster, eat a little better, sleep a little longer, aim a little higher, love a little more, and day by day, get a little happier. And let's take pride in our health. Highmark is proud to support the LGBTQ community. Let's do it all for health.
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AllforHealth.com

What's happening to gays in Chechnya?

By Louie Marven

Editor's Note: In our July-August issue, Louie Marven looked into reports of violence and death directed against LGBT individuals in the Russian territory of Chechnya. We wanted readers to have a handle on how to evaluate fact-based versus 'fake' news. In a second article, Marven digs deeper into the advocacy of the Russia LGBT Network.

"We don't have those kinds of people here. If there are any, take them to Canada."

Ramzan Kadyrov, Head of the Chechen Republic

In Chechnya, what we know about LGBT lives only scratches the surface.

According to the Russia LGBT Network, at the end of March 2017, advocates started seeing messages on social networking sites. People were writing about mass detention of gay and bi men in Chechnya, and the Network wasn't sure if it was true or not. As a precautionary measure, they followed up with an investigation with other human rights organizations in the region and created a hotline.

Eventually, many sources confirmed the reports to be true.

By June 24 as part of NYC Pride, activist Masha Gesson had convened a panel of Russian advocates from the Moscow Community Center who discussed their efforts to assist Chechen LGBT individuals. They spoke to an overflow crowd. A small delegation of Chechnyian and Russian gay men were also in the audience but for security purposes remained out of view of cameras or recording devices.

As an affinity organization Russia LGBT Network by April 1 had started receiving letters from around 80 people in Chechnya. The people contacting the Network gave differing accounts: some reported having been tortured and some reporting witnessed others being tortured, beaten, and even killed.

According to Human Rights Watch, "local security officials rounded up dozens of men on suspicion of being gay, held them in secret detention for days, humiliated, starved, and tortured them. Most returned home barely alive from beatings and electrocutions."

The people who have been contacting the Network don't know if they can trust it or if it's a front by the government to locate and persecute gay men. Even though they don't know who is really answering the hotline, their situation is so desperate that they don't have other options.

The only thing the Network can provide besides the hotline is assistance with immigration; Chechnya is a very specific region and it would be impossible to go there and provide legal help. In Chechnya, there are no LGBT activists and it's impossible to be an open LGBT person.

As of May 2017, the Network helped emigrate about 60 people from Chechnya.

For those who have left Chechnya, it is not safe for them to stay in Russia. The Network has been in conversations in some other countries, but there are very few who are willing to take those refugees. Many who have fled are hiding under precarious circumstances in central Russia.

The Network says that homosexuality is hugely stigmatized in Chechnya. There is such a thing as honor killings. Relatives have hunted down family members believed to be gay or bisexual. And when it comes to the legal authorities, Russian government and law enforcement agencies would speak about what's happening in Chechnya if it wasn't for the international community's solidarity with the LGBT communities there and in other trouble spots.

Human Rights Watch believes that "though no such thing has been admitted by either Russian or Chechen officials in the public domain, it's clear that as a result of the unprecedented international outcry, the Kremlin instructed Chechnya's leadership to call off the purge."

While the round up appears to have stopped, Chechen officials have some disturbing things to say about the situation. In a July 20 interview with ABC News Nightline, Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov denied the existence of gay people in Chechnya:

"We don't have those kinds of people here," Kadyrov said. "If there are any, take them to Canada. Praise be to God. Take them far from us so we don't have them at home. To purify our blood, if there are any here, take them.

"They are devils," he continued. "They are for sale. They are not people."

He even suggested that if Chechen families took matters into their own hands, authorities would look the other way.

"If we have such people here, then I'm telling you officially, their relatives won't let them be because our faith, our mentality, customs and traditions," Kadyrov said. "Even if it's punishable under law,

Please see **CHECHNYA**, page **24**

REMEMBERING:

Journalists honored for AIDS coverage

From page 7

organization had to have their own AIDS reporter," Freedman said. "Everyone had to have their own Jeff Schmalz."

Other writers and artists shared similar tributes to, among others, a cartoonist, an essayist, an editor of novels and a woman who produced what is believed to be the first newsletter for women living with HIV.

After the tributes, journalist Frank Pizzoli, who has written for POZ, announced the launch of the Kiki scholarship for HIV reporting. The scholarship is nicknamed after Curtis "Kiki" Mason, a columnist for POZ magazine who helped pioneer HIV cancer trials and died of AIDS-related complications in 1996.

The scholarship will be awarded to a reporter focused on HIV coverage and will be administered and sponsored annually by NLGJA—The Association of LGBTQ Journalists.

The journalists honored at Bodies on the Line and those who paid tribute to them:

JEFF SCHMALZ, of *The New York Times*, was honored by Samuel G. Freedman.

JOSEPH BEAM, editor of the *Black/Out* journal and the *In the Life* anthology, was honored by Charles Rice-González.

CRAIG HARRIS, editor of the *In the Life anthology,* was honored by Linda Villarosa.

MICHAEL CALLEN, of *PWA Coalition Newsline*, was honored by Bob Lederer and John Riley.

PAUL RYKOFF COLEMAN, of *Outweek*, was honored by Mark Burdett.

IRIS DE LA CRUZ, of *PWA Coalition Newsline,* was honored by Sarah Schulman.

MIKE HIPPLER, of *Bay Area Reporter*, was honored by Mark Schoofs.

KIYOSHI KUROMIYA, of the free internet access program the Critical Path Project, was honored by JD Davids.

COOKIE MUELLER, of *Details* and *East Village Eye*, was honored by Ann Rower.

ASSOTTO SAINT, poet and editor of the anthology *The Road Before Us* and author of the autobiographical anthology *Spells of a Voodoo Doll,* was honored by Anne-christine d'Adesky.

DANNY SOTOMAYOR, of the *Windy City Times,* was honored by Anthony Viti.

MICHELLE WILSON, of the *Positive Woman* newsletter, was honored by Liz Highleyman.

MAX ROBINSON, of *ABC World News*, was honored by A. Toni Young.

CURTIS "KIKI" MASON, of *POZ* magazine, was honored by Frank Pizzoli.

The Bodies on the Line event was cosponsored by the NLGJA, HIVandHepatitis.com, Plus, Positively Aware, *POZ*, *PrideLife* and TheBody.com, with support from the Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF).

Anne-christine d'Adesky, an investigative journalist and documentary filmmaker who reported on the AIDS epidemic for various publications, cohosted the Bodies on the Line: AIDS Journalists Memorial Event, which coincides with the 30th anniversary of ACT UP and AIDS activism. She also penned a memoir, published earlier this year and titled The Pox Lover: An Activist's Decade in New York and Paris.

The Central Voice publisher and editor Frank Pizzoli addressed the AIDS Journalists Memorial Event honoring pioneering journalists who dies of AIDS and others reporting on the epidemic. Pizzoli announced an HIV Scholarship Fund for HIV reporters, named after Curtis "Kiki" Mason (from Pittsburgh) to be administered by the National Gay & Lesbian Journalist Association and co-sponsored by The Knight Foundation and Elton John AIDS Fund.

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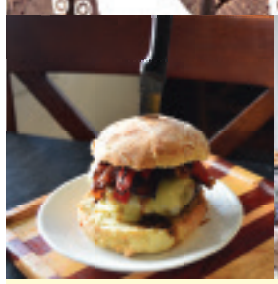

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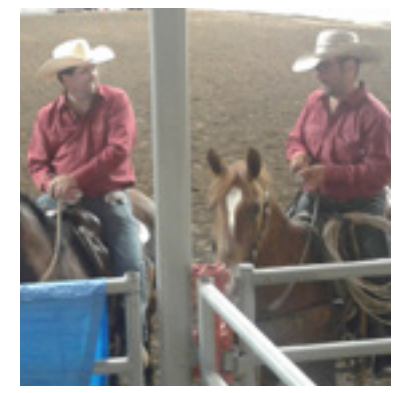


No rhinestones on these cowboys

The Keystone State Gay Rodeo rode into Harrisburg in June. Both men and women, members of the LGBTQ community and their straight allies, competed equally in rodeo events including bull riding, barrel racing, chute dogging, steer decorating and goat dressing. A portion of the rodeo proceeds will go directly to charity.

Gov. invites LGBT community to his house

Gov. Tom Wolf invited members of the state's LGBT community to a reception at the Governor's Residence on Front Street in Harrisburg on July 31. Central Pennsylvania Womyn's Chorus and the Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus entertained. Assembled at the affair where nearly 100 individuals who have or currently play vital roles in the life of the gay community.

Stepping up to march for equality

On June 11, 90 cities including Harrisburg, held Equality marches and/or rallies reaffirming gains made in recent years with LGBT civil rights. Harrisburg's rally and march was organized under the auspices of the region's LGBT Community Center. Harrisburg's event drew about 100 people – gay people, allies, and others.

Movie screening about gay life in the 70s

Central PA Pride Festival in collaboration with the LGBT Center Central PA History Project screened a movie on July 17 about gay life in the 70s. Participants in photo then discussed local and regional history. If anyone has photographs of the 1985 Open Air Festival held in Harrisburg at the Police Athletic League, please contact The Central Voice – posops@aol.com.

Grass roots battles Trump-Pence agenda

In an new offensive against the Trump-Spence agenda, including Pennsylvania, The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has announced a bold, proactive grassroots expansion with the launch of HRC Rising.

HRC Rising is a campaign to accelerate progress in states from coast-to-coast, resist the politics of hate, fight anti-LGBTQ legislation, and fuel pro-equality candidates and initiatives.

"It's not enough to resist the hateful policies and attacks coming from the Trump-Pence regime -- we've got to accelerate the pace of progress toward full equality and secure protections for LGBTQ people in states and communities across the country" said HRC President Chad Griffin.

"Our grassroots army of over 3 million has proven that, even in the face of unprecedented challenges, we can make incredible progress and defeat the hateful politicians who've been emboldened by Donald Trump when we organize and mobilize. The power and determination of the 10 million LGBTQ voters and our allies across America will only continue to grow stronger in the face of discriminatory attacks on our rights and freedoms."

The launch of HRC Rising comes after a year in which HRC significantly expanded its grassroots engagement and proved that the ten million LGBTQ voters in America -- five percent of all voters -- are one of the most important and effective voting blocs in the nation.

In Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Arizona, and Nevada, HRC will make an especially strong, early push to organize against the Trump-Pence agenda and support pro-equality candidates in coming elections.

Mobilizing "equality voters" will be crucial to making future gains because of their reliable support and consistently high turnout. Despite Clinton's loss in last year's presidential election, the results reinforced the importance of the LGBTQ vote for delivering key states.

The launch of HRC Rising represents the opening of another front in HRC's fight against the Trump-Pence agenda, and draws on one of the greatest strengths of the organization: its more than 3 million highly-engaged members, supporters, volunteers and activists in virtually every community coast-to-coast.

One of the models for the HRC Rising initiative has been HRC's successful Project One America program, which launched in 2014 with the goal of dramatically expanding LGBTQ equality in the South through permanent campaigns in Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas. Since the program's launch, several cities and towns have passed comprehensive, trans-inclusive non-discrimination protections -- including in Jackson and Magnolia, Mississippi.

American politics, dark glamour

Salman Rushdie calls his new novel "social realist"

By Frank Pizzoli

A mesmerizing new novel, *The Golden House,* from *New York Times* bestselling author Salman Rushdie, is set in New York City against the backdrop of modern American politics and culture with dark glamour and intrigue reminiscent of *The Great Gatsby.*

On the day of Barack Obama's inauguration, an enigmatic, powerful billionaire from foreign shores takes up residence in "the Gardens," a sheltered, gated community in New York's Greenwich Village. The neighborhood is a bubble within a bubble, and the residents are immediately intrigued by the eccentric Golden family. One of these said neighbors and our guide is René, an ambitious young filmmaker, who befriends the mysterious family in an artistic opportunity to make them the subject of what he hopes will be his career-making film.

Nero Golden lives with his three adult sons: agoraphobic, alcoholic Petya, a brilliant recluse with a tortured mind; Apu, the flamboyant artist, sexually and spiritually omnivorous; D, the youngest son, who harbors an explosive secret even from himself; and a Russian beauty named Vasilisa, who comes along and seduces Nero with high aspirations of her own. René is quickly drawn into their inner circle, becoming privy to their tortured secrets, infidelities and crimes.

Outside "the Gardens," America is facing radical political change—the rise of the Tea Party, identity politics, and backlash against political correctness. While on the brink of a new presidency, an insane, narcissistic presidential candidate known as only The Joker grows stronger and stronger, and the country is turned upside-down.

Salman Rushdie is the author of twelve previous novels - including the controversial *The Satanic Verses, Haroun* and *The Sea of Stories, The Moor's Last Sigh, The Ground Beneath Her Feet, Fury, Shalimar the Clown, The Enchantress of Florence, Luka and the Fire of Life,* and *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights* - and one collection of short stories: *East, West.* He has also published four works of nonfiction - *Joseph Anton, The Jaguar Smile, Imaginary Homelands*, and *Step Across This Line* - and co-edited two anthologies, *Mirrorwork* and *Best American Short Stories 2008.* He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a Distinguished Writer in Residence at New York University. A former president of PEN American Center, Rushdie was knighted in 2007 for services to literature.

Check online at www.thecentralvoice.com for full interview after Sept. 11.

Central Voice: What did you hope to achieve with *The Golden House*?

Salman Rushdie: I wanted to tell a good story. My previous novel was kind of a fairy tale deal and I thought I would try to write an opposite novel with a large, panoramic view, a social realist novel. So that was my starting point.

CV: So that was your use of realism with references to film, the arts and literature?

SR: Yes, I was trying to make a portrait of a particular moment in American life, the last eight years or so. The story takes place in New York City and I try to smell what's in the air. That was one part. The other part is a story about this crazy family which I probably had in my head for a while before I even had the family come to New York. I just brought the two together.

CV: Is Nero Golden a composite?

SR: He comes from the particular background of the Indian Super Rich. I know some of those people. Nero is not based on someone in particular but he is also not a composite. I think he's pretty much himself.

CV: All great cultures have their mad men. Rome, Germany, now the US? Is this our post-Cold War dark age?

SR: It's certainly darkened pretty fast in the last six months. I'd actually thought the last eight years, for a lot of reasons, were a time of considerable optimism. And the changing of that optimism of 2008 to its antithesis in the present is wat I was trying to capture.

CV: Regarding Muslims and the GLBT communities in Muslim nations, are there divisions below the surface? For a few, some, many are same-sex relations are okay? Do queers represent the Decadent West? So they must be thrown from buildings, stoned, honor killed by family?

SR: I think there's a lot of prejudice and people in the transgender community face obstacles.

I grew up in Bombay and where there's always been quite a substantial transgender community. I've spent time in that community listening to their stories and hearing the convictions of their lives. That was for me one of the starting points to start writing about an increasingly sexual subject of gender identity. Here in New York, I've had a couple of friends who have transitioned. One in each direction, male to female and female to male. That's been another starting point for me.

Salman Rushdie appears Sept. 29, 7-9 p.m. at Harrisburg's Midtown Scholar Bookstore to discuss his new novel The Golden House.

U.S. INDIAN TRIBES

Where is same-sex marriage legal?

by Rex Wockner

There are 566 U.S. Indian tribes and they are not covered by the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. At least 20 tribes, listed here, have legalized same-sex marriage to date. A number of others follow the marriage law of the state in which they are located.

- Coquille Indian Tribe in Oregon (2009)
- Mashantucket (Western) Pequot Tribal Nation in Connecticut (2010)
- Suquamish Tribe in Washington (2011)
- Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe in Washington (2012)
- Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians in Michigan (2013)
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in Washington (2013)
- Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians in Michigan (2013)
- Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel in California (2013)
- Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes in Oklahoma (2013)
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in Minnesota (2013)
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians in Washington (2014)
- Eastern Shoshone Tribe and Northern Arapaho Tribe in Wyoming (2014)
- Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes in Alaska (2015)
- Oneida Tribe in Wisconsin (2015)
- Keweenaw Bay Indian Community in Michigan (2015)
- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in Oregon (2015)
- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in Oregon (2015)
- Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota (2016)
- Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma (2016)
- Osage Nation in Oklahoma (2017)

Anatomy of a civil rights confrontation

How far should one go to negate the other's message?

What are our responsibilities when expressing ourselves? Tempers flared at a June LGBT civil rights rally held on the steps of the state Capitol. An anti-gay, anti-Muslim protester clashed with rally-goers leading to an incident where a young woman was hurt. Anthony (on right) tried to intervene, telling the protestor, "This is not a safe spot for you."

By Frank Pizzoli

If all US citizens have the right to free speech, then what are their responsibilities when expressing themselves?

Answers to this question are at the crossroads of understanding what took place in June on the steps of the State Capitol in Harrisburg.

On June 11, 90 cities including Harrisburg held Equality marches and/or rallies reaffirming gains made in recent years with LGBT civil rights.

In promoting the events, organizers nationwide felt renewed efforts were necessary. They cited advances made under former President Barack Obama's administration, mostly through Executive Order, that are being reversed under President Donald Trump.

Harrisburg's rally and march was organized under the auspices of the region's LGBT Community Center.

The center's event permit issued by the Capitol Police included the Capitol steps and immediately adjacent areas like the sidewalk leading up to the steps at Third and State streets.

Harrisburg's event drew about 100 people – gay people, allies, and others.

Observing the rally

Across the street from the Capitol steps were two young men who had attended a Catholic Mass at nearby St. Patrick's Cathedral. One held a Bible in his hand open to a page which referred to homosexuality as an abomination. The other young man said, "I wish the government would stay out of everyone's private life. I don't care who you love."

Several people held up a banner from the Harrisburg Socialist Party.

Passersby in cars tooted horns and waved in support of the rally.

Also attending the event was a man with a protest sign boasting a message that was not in sync with the rally's mission. His sign was anti-immigrant, called for gay "Moslems" to "get" more Pulse shootings. Muslim individuals addressed the event in solidarity with gay issues. Rally day crowd chatter indicated some attendees "thought" he had participated in Harrisburg anti-Muslim protest one day prior to the Equality rally.

Anatomy of the crowd

Attendees do not "register" at public events like this rally and march, so it is difficult to determine with any specificity who's actually there and for what reason.

Attendees and speakers also reflected what is called "Intersectional" representation, a popular word to describe, for example, when LGBT and Muslim or other groups come together at the "intersections" of their lives. The word also means that speakers address issues as they effect real people. They recognize that some lesbians are also immigrants. Or that some gay men are also people of color, often abbreviated as POC in blogs and social media postings.

In other words, in a world of identity politics an individual often has multiple identities. These multiple identities meet at the "intersections" of social justice and public policy making.

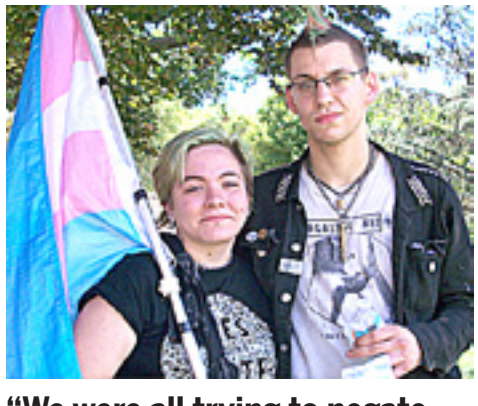
Mood of the crowd

At one point during the rally, while the protester with the 'Pulse massacre' sign stood near the corner of State and Third streets, an area not included in the rally permit, his sign was grabbed away from him by an unidentified attendee who dropped it in a nearby ally. Eventually, the protestor recovered his sign.

Added to the mood of the rally-goers that day: One week before the June 11 Equality March a local student known to some rally attendees had committed suicide. Some attendees were grieving.

Got all that?

Now readers have all the actors on the public stage of free speech in Harrisburg June 11, all on or near the State Capitol steps. Given the backstory - fears of turnbacks on LGBT civil rights, a suicide, and a mixed crowd with no credible way to determine who was there or why, it's fair to say emotions were at peak levels.



"We were all trying to negate his message peacefully."

Tony (pictured with his friend Cassidy, who was injured at a Harrisburg rally)

Then came this –

After rescuing his sign, the 'Pulse' protestor entered into the rally's 'permitted' area. There he mingled with ralliers and eventually tussled with Cassidy, a rally-goer. There are three videos of their interaction: A YouTube video, a Facebook video and a third video from the Capitol Police security tape.

(Go to TheCentralVoice.com for links to videos.}

Two online videos show Cassidy taking the anti-gay protestor's sign from him. "We wanted to negate his message," Cassidy said. "Then he put his sign in front of me. I tried to take it from him, and he knocked me to the ground, I was bleeding from my ear, I'm still nervous," Cassidy told *The Central Voice* shortly after the incident.

Cassidy tells *The Central Voice* that they (Cassidy chooses to be identified by the pronouns *they* and *them*) and Cassidy's friend Tony thought the protestor's sign "was promoting violence," Cassidy said.

"We went to stand with the other people who were around him [the protestor]," Tony said.

Asked what Cassidy would have done if the protestor tried to take Cassidy's flag, Cassidy said, "If he had tried to take my flag I would have tried to take it back. I would not have pushed him." The push "was uncalled for" Tony added, "We were all trying to negate his message peacefully."

Tony explained that the group surrounding the protestor offered to discuss differences over coffee at a nearby coffee house. "He refused," Tony said, who surmised that the protestor thought they invitation was to go into the street. "We clarified that we meant discussion over coffee," Tony explained.

At one point, Anthony, a rally attendee from Lebanon, said he intervened by telling the protestor "This is not a safe spot for you. You are outnumbered." He says, "I respect everyone's opinion but he [the protester] was not safe. That was my concern."

"When so many people I know cannot be themselves, and I'm a gay man myself, we've all been through so much bullying and harassment, myself included, well, I wasn't going to let the protestor harass anyone or be harassed," Anthony said.

Accounts of the incident differ

Social media chatter about the incident referred to 'punches' – allegedly delivered from the sign carrier to Cassidy – that are either not captured, not visible or did not occur since punches cannot be seen on the two publicly available videos.

The 'punches' are also not visible on the official Capitol Police tape, according to LGBT Community Center Vice President Heidi Notario, who following the incident, organized a meeting with the Capitol Police. Louie Marven, who at the time was the center's executive director

"We're working with Silent Witness to hold trainings on how to peacefully demonstrate."

Heidi Notario

Please see **CONFRONTATION**, page **25**

Will Harrisburg's Dec. 2 anti-white supremacy rally occur without violence?

On Nov. 5, 2016, the Sunday before Donald Trump was elected president, the National Socialist Movement protested against diversity at the State Capitol. That same day, the organization formally announced that they and 11 other "white power" organizations were now a coalition.

Since then, the flames of division within the US have burned hotter.

In hindsight, if the 300 anti-fascist – or *antifa* for short - protestors hadn't shown up, the white power organizers would have had a failed event. Few supporters showed up to cheer on the white supremacists. Only a few of the expected 11 supremacist groups sent members.

Here's how the 2016 event played out by the numbers:

- Nazis 50, Counter-protestors 200, Police 100
- Nazis obtained a permit. Counter-protestors did not.
- Most notable Nazi moment: Repeated shouts of "White Power" delivered with Adolph Hitler's Nazi salute.
- Most notable Unity moment: When speakers talked about what disparate economic and racial groups have in common.

Looks like those days are over.

Susan Bro, mother of Heather Hayer, the woman who was killed during protests in Charlottesville, said within minutes of her daughter's death: "I'd rather have my child, but if I have to give her up, by golly we're going to make it count..."

And it looks like a number of local groups from Lancaster, Carlisle, Allentown, York and Philadelphia which generally represent what are called "rise and resist" groups, are rising and resisting against what occurred in Charlottesville VA and its aftermath.

Making it count...

On Dec. 2, Harrisburg Rising is planning a rally against white supremacy on the steps on the State Capitol. They met Aug. 26 to adopt their organizing principles.

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A rebel busts loose and finds her way to the pulpit

By Christopher Thomas
The Central Voice

Rev. Jones-Ramirez

The trip from Baltimore, MD to Mountville, PA isn't too long (about an hour along I-83).

For Rev. Angela T. Jones-Ramirez, though, it took about five decades of soul searching, perseverance, and self-realization.

Rev. Jones-Ramirez is starting her tenure as Senior Pastor of Vision of Hope Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) about seven miles east of Lancaster City.

"It is a bit of a culture shock," she said, the differences between Lancaster and Baltimore. "But I love leaving the city. There's a transformation that happens as you drive up I83 and pass over the Susquehanna River. It's amazing. There's peace and tranquility. I absolutely love the drive.

Rev. Jones-Ramirez – who goes by "Pastor Angie" – grew up just north of Charm City during a time of tremendous change. Not long after her birth in 1968, riots rocked the sister cities of Baltimore and Washington, DC following the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

But she still remembers times being simpler and safer out on the streets for her and her three siblings.

"Back then 'Officer Friendly' was Officer Friendly," she recalled. "If you got lost or if you needed a couple of quarters or something to get home – he would even get you a ride home. The neighborhoods were a little (friendlier), there was a village mentality back then. It didn't seem to be so much survival of the fittest as Baltimore is becoming today."

Things were not as safe back home.

Her father was a "functioning alcoholic" who subjected her, her mother, and her siblings to emotional and psychological abuse. As an adolescent, she turned to weight training and sports – playing softball, football, and rugby – as an outlet and to help defend her mother from her father's scorn.

"I learned how to lift weights and then growing up…I started picking fights so I could learn how to learn those skills that I had learned…to protect myself."

Her interest in athletics went against the grain for young ladies growing up in the Baptist tradition, as she was. Stirrups and barbells had to be exchanged for petticoats and hymnbooks on Sunday mornings. While she conformed to social norms, it went against her sensibilities. There was little indication then that later she'd wear a white collar around her neck and become a health professor at Baltimore City College.

"I became a rebel," she said. "I got tired of pretending to be something that I wasn't."

Pastor Angie said she always had a way of standing out and being different from

Please see **REBEL**, page **16**

You can't make this up...

Guy who says God sends natural disasters to punish gays has his home destroyed in a natural disaster

DeadState.org reports Tony Perkins, president of the anti-gay religious lobbying group the Family Research Council, had his home destroyed by the massive flooding ravaging Southern Louisiana previously.

Although no one wants to celebrate a person losing their home, the destruction of Perkins' house isn't without irony, considering that he's claimed in the past that natural disasters are God's way of punishing an increasingly gay-friendly world.

Calling into his own radio show, Perkins described the flood as being of "biblical proportions," adding that he and his family will have to live in a camper for 6 months until the damage is repaired.

But Perkins was careful to point out that this particular flood wasn't because of the gays, but rather an "incredible, encouraging spiritual exercise to take you to the next level in your walk with an almighty and gracious God who does all things well."

The floods in Louisiana have so far killed 11 people and destroyed over 40,000 homes.

Last year, Perkins had as a guest on his radio show Christian "prophet" Jonathan Cahn, who claimed that Hurricane Joaquin was a sign of God's wrath for the legalization of gay marriage.

Ministering to the wholeness and holiness of LGBT Catholics

If an LGBT former or currently practicing Catholic wanted to worship in a welcoming environment, the region is home to The Old Catholic Church.

Locally, the Most Rev. Michael J. Scalzi shepards the Parish of Saint Joseph, domiciled at Saint Andrew's in the Valley Episcopal Church, 4620 Linglestown Road, Harrisburg.

Bishop Scalzi shares with readers why his congregation may be a resource for them:

Central Voice: If an individual or couple wanted to return to The Old Catholic Church, are the traditions they may have grown up practiced there? Sacraments? Holiday traditions?

Bishop Scalzi: If by "returning" you are referring to "lapsed" Catholics returning to their Catholic faith tradition (but who are not interested in "returning" to the Roman Catholic Church), they would find themselves in a very familiar and comfortable place. The seven Sacraments are the same (although the requirements for the reception of them may be quite different). The Sacraments are offered freely to all without any artificial barriers.

CV: Is The Old Catholic Church an LGBT church or an LGBT accepting church?

BS: The Old Catholic Church is not an LGBT church as we are not a straight church. Are we an LGBT accepting church? I sure hope so! We perform same-sex marriages and a number of our clergy are gay/lesbian. One of our priests is transgendered. Doesn't get much more accepting than that, wouldn't you say?

CV: If an individual or couple were before your right now, what would you say?

BS: The first thing I would do is ask them to tell me their story: who are they, what are their backgrounds, what brought them here. I would then ask them if they would like to hear my story. I would tell them everything about me (I have no secrets). And then I would ask them what they think The Old catholic Church can do for them, and what, if anything, I could personally do for them. I would do what I could to develop a relationship with them and go from there.

CV: Add anything you think is important.

BS: So many people have walked away from their churches because they have felt unloved and unwanted. Church membership and attendance across all denominations is down dramatically. We, as "Church," have helped to make people feel that they can be "spiritual without being religious." People feel that they do not need to belong to a faith community; they can walk in the woods and be with God. Of course, that's true. But it is the sense of "belonging" and being with others who accept and love you for who you are without judgement or prejudice.

We all face some much hatred and fear in our world today: Are we helping to promote that intolerance? So many mainline denominations preach one message but behave differently. Sadly, those who were raised Catholic may have found that they are no longer welcome in a church with their spouses, partners, etc. Oh, yes, they can come and sit in the pew, but they are told that their lifestyle is "disordered" and sinful. The Old Catholic Church has gone back to the way the church began many centuries ago. We are not a hierarchical church: clergy and laity sit side-by-side and worship together and build up the Body of Christ together.

INFO: *www.TheParishofStJoseph.org*

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REBEL:

Pastor Angie's journey of (almost) a hundred miles

From page 14

her peers in not-so-subtle ways. She lived in a primarily white section of Baltimore County and was often the only black person among her peers, though she said most people didn't make a big deal of it.

"But I knew that I was different," she said.

As she reached puberty, she began to discover she stood out from her peers in a major, though less obvious way. That realization came by way of her middle school gym teacher.

"I had a huge crush on my physical education teacher who was also my softball coach," she remembered. "I would do any and everything to outdo everybody so I could get her attention."

How she felt inside was a Pastor Angie's secret for years. She mentioned trying to kiss a boy once but "it was like kissing my brother" She described herself as a bull in a china shop who didn't want to stay in the closet anymore.

The times in which she lived, her religious upbringing, and her sexuality clashed and ruthlessly and sent Pastor Angie perilously close to committing suicide, which she confided to a high school softball teammate.

Thankfully, her coach was listening as well.

"I didn't know she was same-gender loving and she kept saying 'I want you to come to my church' and that was MCC Baltimore." Pastor Angie said.

Though she didn't take her coach's offer up immediately, Pastor Angie eventually found her way to that church after coming out, "busting the doors of the hinges" in college and meeting her coach at Baltimore Pride under happier circumstances.

"And I was walking around and someone ran up behind me and hugged me from behind and I turned around and it was my high school softball coach," she remembered. "And she goes 'I knew! I knew! It was just a matter of time.' And so she took me to her church group at the pride festival."

Pastor Angie was in a similar place Rev. Troy Perry (founder of the Metropolitan Community Church) was in and 3,000 miles west in the Los Angeles suburbs in the late 1960s. Perry – who had been a Pentecostal minister – was defrocked after he came out. It was also around that time his long-time lover had left him and Perry nearly bled to death in his bathtub after opening the veins in his wrists.

But Perry lived and started the MCC in 1968, a Congregationalist denomination with a special ministry geared toward the LGBT community. It was groundbreaking for its time, preceding the Stonewall Riots and occurring only three years after to clashes between the San Francisco Police and members of both the local LGBT population and sympathetic clergy, members of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual.

"Each church is run by the congregation," Pastor Angie said, describing the church's structure. "The pastor is an employee of the congregation…they're pretty much like the boss and we're the hired staff…and the congregation holds the power. We serve the congregation."

Though some mainline, Christian denominations have at least softened their stances on openly LGBT laity and clergy; they were still universally persona non grata in the late 1960s.

Pastor Angie said MCC is a place of healing for those who have been hurt by churches in the past.

"MCC was a MASH unit for me," she said.

Now, she's taking on a leadership role at a congregation with 50 people on the roll and about 25-30 regulars at weekly services. As is the case at many mainline denominations, Pastor Angie is hoping to see a boost in attendance.

The church has become an accepted part of the community, she said, but not until after dealing with some initial pushback when it was established in 1993.

"Several of the churches in and around the area did not want MCC Vision of Hope in Mountville," Pastor Angie said. "when they thought 'same gender loving people' they thought 'parties' and a lot of lewd behavior. The township council tried to block it. But it was such that we came, we were here, and we were accepted."

And like a lot of mainline congregations, especially those that are affirming, she's hoping to diversify the church's role in the community. Though the church has and continues to have a special ministry toward LGBT community, she also wants Vision of Hope and other MCC congregations to take strong, uncompromising roles in other social justice causes like Black Lives Matters.

"The whole denomination/movement goes so much beyond the LGBT thing," she said. "Because at the end of the day, we're all people and we all want that engagement."

But even has she hopes to expand the church within its walls and in its community; she's trying to remember important lessons she's learned throughout her life. One of the most important is remembering she is only human.

"My therapist and my spiritual director, both of them, independently of one another, have said 'hey, you're not the Savior, that's not your job," she said. "

Rev. Angela T. Jones-Ramirez is the Senior Pastor at Vision of Hope Metropolitan Community Church in Mountville, PA.

NOT GAY:

Exploring the conversion therapy controversy

From page 1

will lose your family, be ostracized from the church in which you grew up or your community in general, there can be a strong pull to seek change. When the negativity becomes too great, individuals can internalize the homophobia and think that changing their sexual orientation is the answer.

What about youth who enter reparative therapy?

Most often they are there because their parents sent them to therapy, not because they want to change their sexual orientation. They are there because their parents and/or family are uncomfortable with their child identifying with a sexual orientation that is not straight. What we have learned is that the family goes through a "coming out" process and sometimes the family members can benefit from therapy to cope with their feelings and the negative messages from society.

What we know is that trying to change someone's sexual orientation does not work and can be harmful. What we also know is that youth who have families that are supportive and allow the youth to identify their sexual orientation for themselves, have better mental health, and cope better with negative messages from the world around them.

My personal experience working with LGBT youth for over 20 years has been consistent with this finding. As a result mental health professional organizations, such as the American Psychological Association, consider it unethical to try to change someone's sexual orientation.

There are also ex-gay ministries that view homosexuality as a sin, attempt to change sexual orientation, and even claim they are successful even when there is evidence to the contrary. Studies have also shown that those who claim they changed their orientation, in the long term they go back to homosexual relationships. Not only are these ministries unsuccessful in changing someone's sexual orientation they also create negative self-esteem in the person and other harmful effects.

It is also not unheard of for parents or other individuals, often based on their religious beliefs, to use strategies on their own try to change a person's, often a youth's, sexual orientation. This might include cutting off the youth's access to the internet and all social media, only allowing the youth to associate with peers at organized religious activities, and not allowing the youth to associate with anyone they perceive as gay or lesbian. In the situations I am aware of, the young person usually became depressed and ended up in a psychiatric hospital.

Another example would be the houseparents' at The Milton Hershey School who allegedly asked students to view a video of an antigay sermon. This was not therapy provided by or sanctioned by the psychologists at the school. However, it contributed to making the home environment of those young men stressful and emotionally unsafe and should not be permitted in any school or residences that serve youth.

Instead of trying to change someone's sexual orientation we would do better to understand the experiences of people whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual. We should help families who are struggling to understand their family member's sexual orientation by providing them with accurate information and empathy for their experience. If someone is truly confused or struggling with their sexual orientation a reputable therapist will help them explore and work through their feelings, letting the person discover what is true for them.

It is not ethical to try to promote any one sexual orientation and it is not in the person's best interest. We should be striving to create environments and supports to help people, whether gay or straight, be the best version of themselves.

Melinda Eash, M.S., is a practicing psychologist.

I read banned books

Ally in the Academy

By Trum Simmons

Banned Books Week this year is Sept. 24-30, a good time to check on the latest book challenges across the country. The American Library Association (ALA) has been organizing these weeks since 1981, the year Ronald Reagan took office and Jerry Falwell was making headlines with his Moral Majority.

In 2017 we now have a president who doesn't read books, and has no idea how closely his administration thus far mirrors George Orwell's classic novel 1984, one of the all-time most-challenged books in the United States and around the world.

Our president hammers away at what he calls "fake news" in the mainstream media while spewing all sorts of Orwellian rhetoric and presenting outright lies as truth.

One of the slogans of the Party in 1984 was "Ignorance is Strength."

If ignorance is strength, the Trump leadership approach must be strong indeed, for he makes the Know-Nothing Party of the 1840s and 1850s look like amateurs.

I created a course at HACC in the early 1980s called Banned Books; this meant that my students and I got to read and study some truly wonderful books. I'm talking about *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Color Purple, Brave New World* and *The Catcher in the Rye,* among others.

"Back in the 1980s a Texas parent challenged the dictionary being considered because of all the bad words it contained. "

Students read and gave class presentations on many other challenged books, including Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) which achieved renewed acclaim last spring after a TV adaptation watched by millions. *Heather Has Two Mommies* (1989) was another.

Five of the top 10 books challenged in 2016 were from people who didn't appreciate LGBTQ characters, especially transgender characters.

The top five list of 2016 compiled by the Office of Intellectual Freedom of the ALA included *Two Boys Kissing* by David Levithan (the cover alone gave some people hives because it included an image of two boys kissing) and *I Am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, which has a transgender child in it.

The office recorded 323 documented requests in 2016, and we know from surveys that most requests are not reported and don't get media coverage.

In 1981 Jerry Falwell told his followers to check their school libraries and textbooks for "immoral, anti-family and anti-American content." In 2017, a group called

The Florida Citizens' Alliance helped push through a law that says parents or any residents may challenge a book or other instructional materials in an independent hearing.

Keith Flaugh, a founder of the alliance, said his study of some 60 textbooks were "full of political indoctrination, religious indoctrination, revisionist history and distorting our founding values and principles." Flaugh said these books contain a lot of "garbage."

For decades the Texas Board of Education has been hearing objections to textbooks along the same line as the Florida folks. The difference here is that a commission of 15 people hear objections and then rule on the materials presented.

The objections in Texas are the same as those in Florida, so textbooks that feature information on the LGBT spectrum will have a hard time in the commission's hearings.

Back in the 1980s a Texas parent challenged the dictionary being considered because of all the bad words it contained. The earnest man read aloud a list of the words, after asking for God's forgiveness. Some of the commission members blanched as he read "fuck … shit … dildo," and some 10 others.

Where are we today in the Trump era? The Reagan era is considered by many as the start of today's culture wars, which not too long ago were thought to be on the wane. But the culture wars have their origins deep in American history and probably will never die. It is scary to see the latest breakout of hostilities, especially given this time of "alternative facts" and "fake news."

I don't think we are going to regress all that much. In any case, there's no question we need to fight these efforts to halt the advance of inclusion and equality in our country.

At Pride Festival of Central PA on July 29 I was uplifted by the turnout of so many folks. It was a beautiful day celebrating beautiful people--people who represent the best of America. We have earned our place in American culture including our art, literature and school textbooks. Ignorance is not strength, regardless of what any president thinks or says.

Oh what a (FAB) night!

One FAB Night, the LGBT Community Center of Central Pennsylvania's annual event to honor those who have made a significant impact in the life of the community will be held Sat., Sept. 30.

For a second year, FAB will be held at the State Museum of Pennsylvania, 300 N Street, Harrisburg.

The event celebrates the past year of LGBT life in Central Pennsylvania. Individuals and organizations that have a special impact will also be honored.

The awards program is followed by a reception with entertainment, dancing, silent auction, hors d'oeuvres, and cash bar. Dress code is Queer Cocktail Attire.

FAB is a key source of funding for the LGBT Center of Central Pennsylvania.

Online registration is required.

Reservations are $80/person for general admission and $150/person for a VIP level that includes champagne toast with honorees and one drink ticket.

Free parking is available in the Capitol Complex.

Central Voice is a longtime sponsor of FAB. Founding publisher and editor Frank Pizzoli is a past FAB award recipient.

The LGBT Community Center of Central Pennsylvania is a volunteer-led effort that strives to create a regionally representative community center that is both a location and a unifying point for central Pennsylvania's large, diverse, and multi-county LGBT population.

The mission of the center is to create a common ground for the LGBT community and allies in the region by providing services through educational, cultural, and community activities that foster wholeness. The center seeks to create a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment; provide and support comprehensive programs throughout the community, and embrace diversity, health and wellness.

Register: www.fallachievementbenefit.org

Enjoy art, live music during Gallery Walk

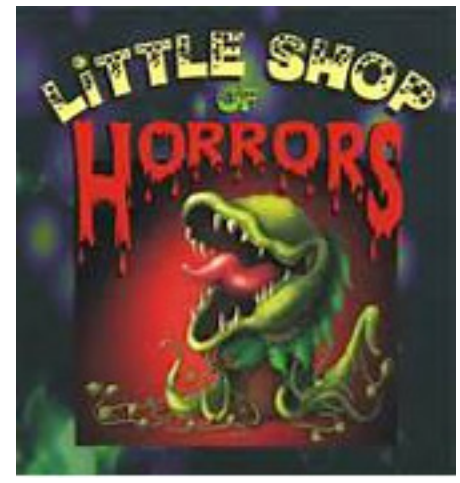
Now in its 29th year, Harrisburg Gallery Walk showcases new sites and innovations. On Sun., Sept. 10, from 11 AM to 6 PM, 25 galleries and studios welcome visitors with original art, live music and refreshments. Details - www.artassocofhbg.com

Piano man Khaldun

Piano player extraordinaire Khaldun recently shared his talent on 2nd Street in center city Harrisburg. "I've been playing piano since the age of 12. Then I turned to bass. After 14 years I'm back to piano," he tells The Central Voice.

Live performances coming to the midstate

DOUBT
September 7 – 16
Ephrata Performing Arts Center - Sharadin Bigler Theatre
Doubt is one of the most renowned plays of our time. EPAC is thrilled to present this topical, relevant, and controversial play to you, our loyal audience. The play is set in the fictional St. Nicholas Church School in the Bronx during the fall of 1964. The play was turned into an Academy Award-nominated film starring Philip Seymour Hoffman as Father Flynn and Meryl Streep as Sister Aloysius. The inspiration for the 2008 Academy Award-winning movie of the same name, Doubt deals with the uncomfortable and controversial issues of child abuse within the Catholic Church and forms a parable of incrimination and humanity. Tickets can be at 717-733-7966 x 1.



LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS
Sept.19 - Oct.15
Fulton Theatre
A psychedelic comedy thriller just in time for Halloween! Feed your need for musical hilarity with this delicious gem, but whatever you do, DO NOT FEED THE PLANT! Tickets: Purchased at Theatre, by calling 717-397-7425, or online.

RED HOT CHILLI PIPERS
Sept. 26, 7:30 PM
Majestic Theatre, Gettysburg College
It's bagpipes. It's rock. It's bagrock! A blazing rock band and show so hot, it carries its own health warning! Info: 717-337-8200; boxofficeinfo@gettysburg.edu

HARRISBURG STORY SLAM
At Harrisburg Hilton's Hill Society
Oct. 5, 7:30 PM
Whitaker Center
If you like telling stories, hearing stories, or just fun in general, you will definitely want to check out Whitaker Center's Story Slam at the Hilton's Hill Society! A Story Slam is a great excuse for anyone 21+ to get on stage and tell the crowd one of their favorites. Each month has its own theme and own winner. In November, the top two winners from the Story Slams in July-October will descend upon the Hilton for the ultimate throw down- the Grand Slam! Think of it like Celebrity Deathmatch but with real people and zero violence. This is a friendly competition and we invite storytellers of all caliber to show their stuff! Winners will receive a prize courtesy of the Hilton. Tickets: 717-214-ARTS (2787)

Whitaker Center Presents
HARRISBURG STORY SLAM
@ Harrisburg Hilton

LEWIS BLACK: The Rant, White & Blue tour
Oct. 28, 8 PM
Hershey Theatre
Lewis Black, GRAMMY Award-winning, stand-up comedian, is one of the most prolific and popular performers working today. He executes a brilliant trifecta as a stand-up comedian, actor and author. Receiving critical acclaim, he performs more than 200 nights annually, to sold-out audiences throughout Europe, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. Tickets: 1-800-745-3000, HersheyTheatre.com

All wrapped up

From yarn bombing to branch weaving, art installations are popping up all along the banks of the Susquehanna River

From page 1

Street art or grafitti?

Yarn bombing is a form of graffiti or street art that employs colorful displays of yarn or fibre rather than paint or chalk. Yarn bombs tend to be less destructive other forms of graffiti and convey a softer, gentler form of expression. The yarn-wrapped trees on Front Steet in Harrisburg may have been meant to highlight a cause, create a buzz or simply to brighten up the city.

Dreamweaver

***The Central Voice Eye* spied local artist Shawn Maykovich (right) weaving a limbs-and-root installation along Harrisburg's Susquehanna River. "I'm working on it as time permits," he says. A few weeks later, *The Eye* found what looks like a multiplier effect (above.)**

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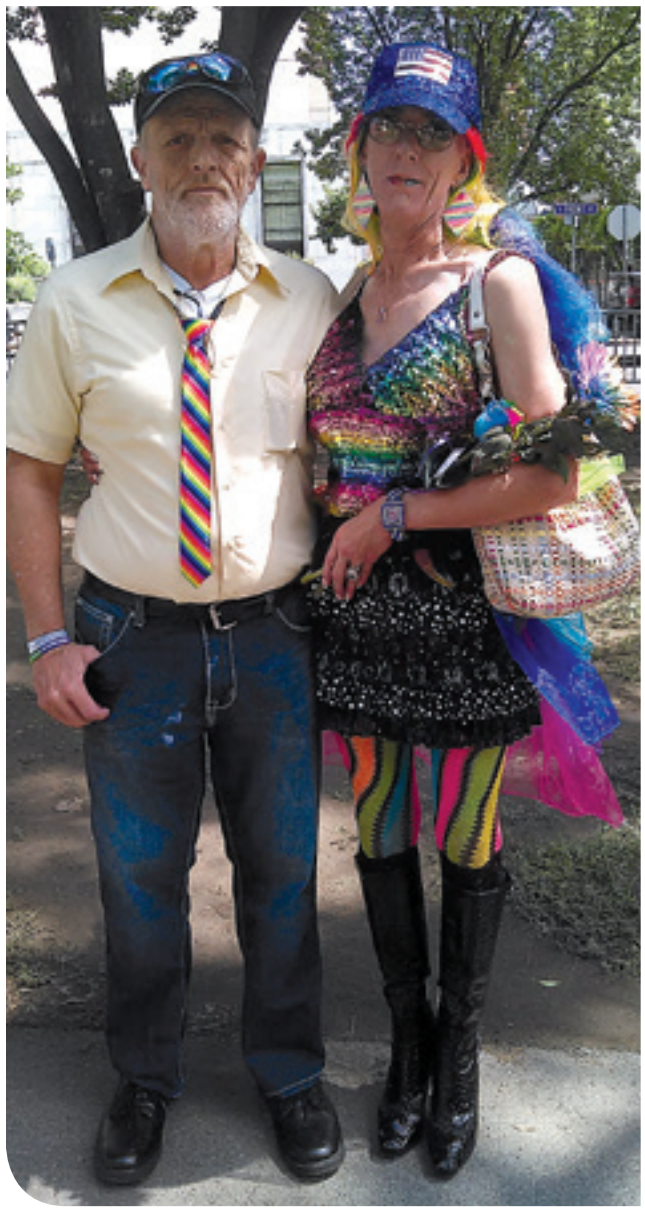

LANCASTER
6/25/17

For more photos visit www.thecentralvoice.com

York Equality Fest next page >

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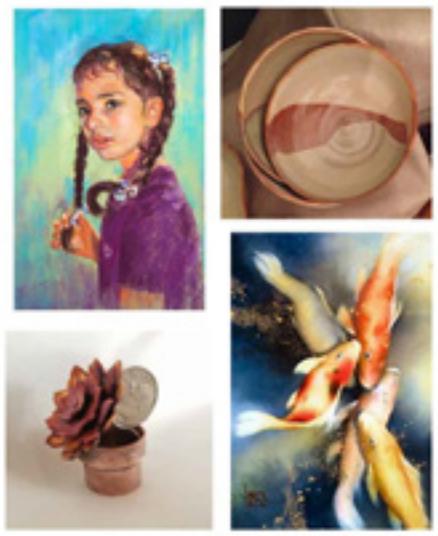

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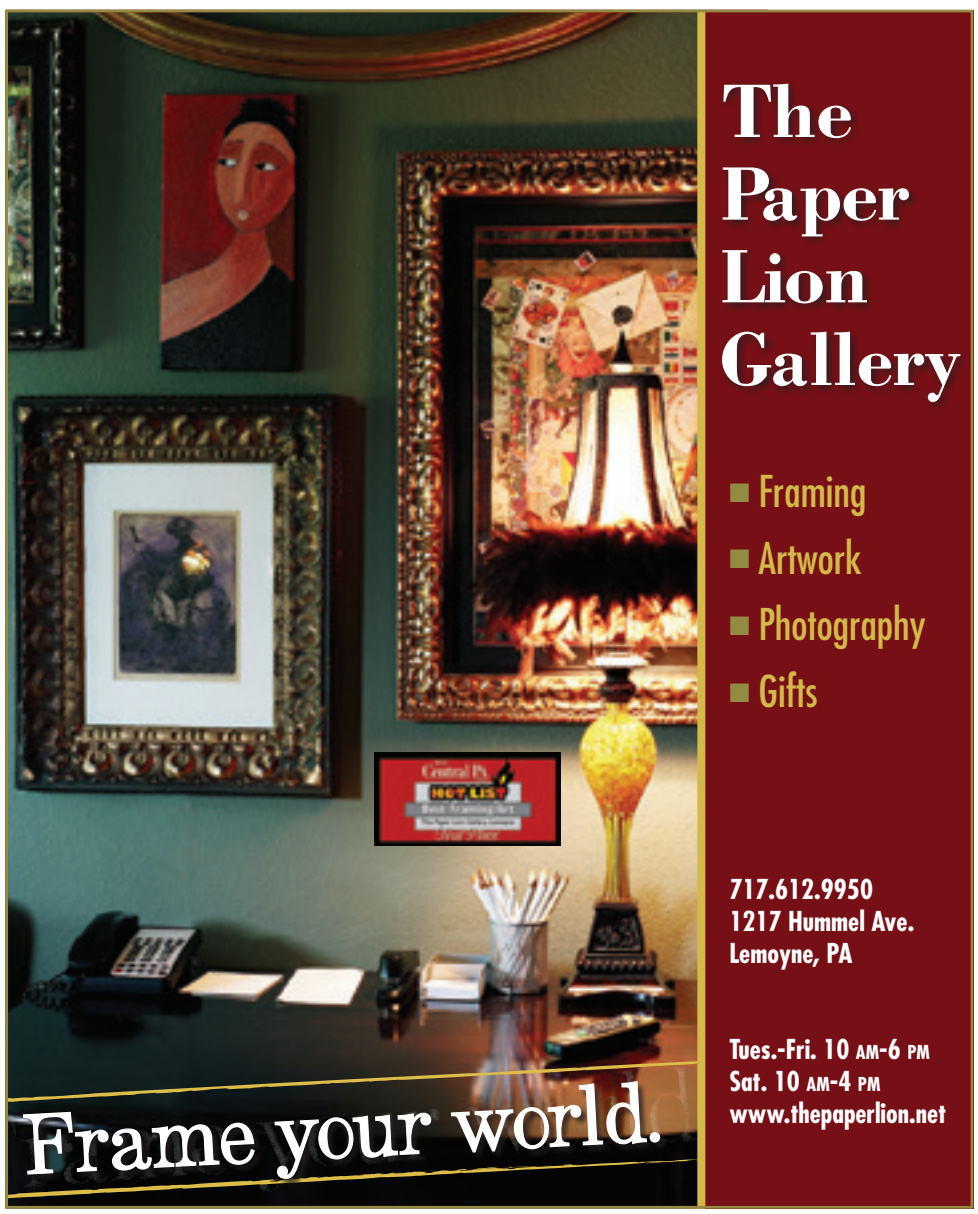

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PRIDE ACROSS THE NATION

Dyke march, NYC, NY

Pride parade, Erie, PA

Rainbow crosswalks, Houston, TX

PRIDE AROUND THE WORLD

In the US, we openly celebrate Pride events even though others disagree. First amendment rights protect our community and those who disagree with our progress. Here's a sample of what's going on in Turkey, Tanzania, Poland, Ireland, and Serbia.

TURKEY - Turkish police reportedly used tear gas and fired rubber bullets to disperse civilians trying to stage a gay Pride march in Istanbul in defiance of a ban.

POLAND - 50,000 people took part in Warsaw Pride June 29 compared to some 20,000 in previous years. Last year, when anti-gay protestors smashed the windows of a Polish gay-rights NGO

IRELAND - Organizers of Dublin LGBTQ Pride Parade said 30,000 people took part in this year's event.

SERBIA - About 100 Serbian LGBT marchers and their supporters held a World Pride event June 24 in the Serbian capital, Belgrade, under heavy police protection.

AFRICA - Tanzania has threatened to arrest and expel activists, as well as deregister all non-governmental organizations that campaign for gay rights. Homosexuality is a criminal offence in the East African nation.

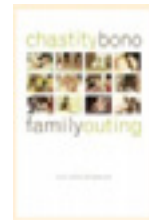
Back-to-school reading for parents, teachers and students

Dauphin County Library Book Reviews

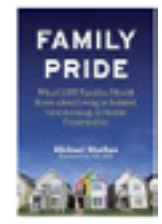
By Yvonne Carmichael

In time for the new school year, here are a list of titles you'll find in the library covering parenting and family relationships, children and teens, and of course school. Fall programs at The Library are being scheduled now and are sure to be of interest to all ages. In September, our Fall 2017 Blueprint Program guide will be published which gives more details. Pick one up at any of our locations or by going online at www.dcls.org. And remember, with a library card, a world of reading, listening and watching opens up for you.

Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is
by Abigail Garner
"A nationally recognized family rights activist offers a much-needed book of first-person accounts, guidance, and consciousness-raising for gay parents and their families." (publication summary)



Family Outing
by Chaz Bono
"The daughter of Sonny and Cher presents a comprehensive guide to the coming-out process, interweaving her personal story with those of other gays and lesbians of various backgrounds to detail the stages, difficulties, and rewards of coming out." (publication summary)

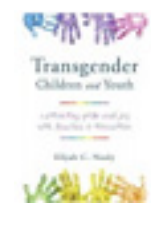


Family Pride: What LGBT Families Should Know About Navigating Home, School, and Safety In Their Neighborhoods
by Michael Shelton
"Despite the progress made in gay rights, LGBT people are still at high risk of being victimized. While the national focus remains on the mistreatment of gay people in schools, the reality is that LGBT families also face hostility in various settings--professional, recreational, and social. Family Pride is the first book for queer parents, families, and allies that emphasizes community safety. Michael Shelton offers concrete strategies that LGBT families can use to intervene in and resolve difficult community issues, teach their children resiliency skills, and find safe and respectful programs for their children." (from publisher)

GLBTQ: The Survival Guide For Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Teens
by Kelly Huegel
"Describes the challenges faced by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered teens and offers practical advice, real-life experiences, and accessible resources and support groups." (publication summary)

Life At School And In The Community
by Richard Worth
"Discusses problems that GLBT students may face in school and offers stories of inspirational teens who have won court cases and started organizations to make their school safer and more accepting." (publication summary)

Raising My Rainbow: Adventures in Raising A Fabulous Gender Creative Son
by Lori Duron
"This is Lori Duron's account of her and her family's adventures raising a gender-creative son. Whereas her older son, Chase, is a Lego-loving, sports-playing boy›s boy, her younger son, C.J., would much rather twirl around in a pink sparkly tutu. C.J. is gender variant or gender nonconforming, whichever you prefer. Whatever the term, Lori has a boy who likes girl stuff, really likes girl stuff. He floats on the gender-variation spectrum from super-macho-masculine on the left all the way to super-girly-feminine on the right." (publication summary)

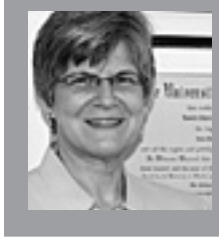


Transgender Children And Youth: Cultivating Pride And Joy With Families In Transition
by Elijah C. Nealy
"Elijah C. Nealy, a therapist and former deputy executive director of New York City's LGBT Community Center, and himself a trans man, has written the first-ever comprehensive guide to understanding, supporting, and welcoming trans kids. Covering everything from family life to school and mental health issues, as well as the physical, social, and emotional aspects of transition, this book is full of best practices to support trans kids." (publication summary)

Yvonne Carmichael is Collection Management Administrator for the Dauphin County Library System. Find out more at dcls.org.

Expunging your criminal records in PA

The Law and You



By Laurie T. Baulig, Esq.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, nearly one in three adult Americans has a criminal record. In Pennsylvania, those records are publicly available and can result in the denial of employment, housing, education and credit. Certain records in Pennsylvania may, however, be permanently removed from public view through a legal process known as "expungement."

In determining which criminal records may be expunged, it is important to distinguish between conviction and non-conviction data. Conviction data consists of charges resulting in guilty verdicts, guilty pleas, and pleas of nolo contendere ("no contest"). Non-conviction data consists of charges that were dismissed, withdrawn, or "nolle prossed," meaning the district attorney declined to prosecute the alleged offense. In Pennsylvania, all non-conviction data is eligible for expungement. Convictions are eligible for expungements if:

The individual received a pardon from the Governor for that conviction.

The individual is over 70 and has been arrest-free for last 10 years.

The individual has been dead for 3 years or more.

Additionally, convictions for lesser crimes, known as "summary offenses" may be expunged if the individual has been arrest and conviction free for a period of at least five years. Summary offenses are neither misdemeanors nor felonies and include, for example, shoplifiting, disorderly conduct, underage drinking, and public drunkenness.

The first step in the expungement process is therefore to determine which records are expungeable and which are not. An individual's criminal records are available on the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania Web Portal, https://ujsportal.pacourts.us. From the home page, click on "Docket Sheets." From the dropdown menu, click on the level of court you wish to search, typically either the magisterial district courts or courts of common pleas. Searching both are recommended. Under "Search Type," enter "Participant Name" and enter the individual's first and last name. Then enter the county where the arrest was made. The results are for that county only. Separate searches are required for each county where the individual was arrested and prosecuted. The results of the Docket search will appear on the left-hand side at the bottom of the screen. Click on the icon on the far left and click on "Docket Sheet" (this is the so-called "rap" sheet).

The Docket Sheet has a section called "Charges." It will list the offenses the defendant was charged with, their grade (for example, "F1" means felony in the first degree; "M2" means misdemeanor in the second degree) and the "disposition" of the charges. As mentioned above, only non-conviction data and summary offenses are eligible for expungement.

Expunging criminal records in Pennsylvania requires the filing of a petition for expungement in the county court where the charges were filed. Forms for the petition, as well as sample court orders, are available on the UJS Webportal (click on "Forms for the Public"). The petition must also include a criminal records history from the Pennsylvania State Police ("PSP"), available at https://epatch.state.pa.us. There is an $8 fee for ordering the report on-line; the fee is $10 if the request is made by mail. The petition for expungement must be filed within 60 days of receiving the PSP report. A filing fee must accompany the petition. That fee varies by county: in Lancaster County, the fee is $137; in York County the fee is over $200. The fees may be waived if the individual has income below a certain threshhold; typically, if the individual would qualify for legal aid, the waiver will be granted.

...expungement is more than a path: it is a legal right that should be accessible to every qualified citizen in the Commonwealth.

The legal standard for granting an expungement petition is that no compelling state interest is served by having the charges remain on the petitioner's criminal history record. The District Attorney's Office must receive a copy of the petition and must sign-off on the expungement before the court can grant the request. While there is no deadline for the D.A.'s Office to act on the petition, it generally takes at least 30 days for the Office to review the petition and report to the court. The court may take up to an additional 30 days to act on the petition. Once the petition is granted, an order is issued requiring the arresting agency to destroy all criminal records, fingerprints, photographic plates and photographs that resulted from the arrest. The order is also sent to the D.A.'s office, PSP, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other criminal justice agencies involved in the arrest and prosecution of the petitioner.

While the process for expungement is fairly straightforward, most individuals would benefit from assistance of counsel in reviewing their criminal history information and preparing the petition for expungement, which is essentially a legal document. Fortunately, there are several organizations in Central Pennsylvania that can provide these services, in some cases, pro bono. These include: Mid-Penn Legal Services; the Dauphin County Bar Association; and the York County Bar Association.

Another non-profit that has assisted both individuals and attorneys in the expungement process is the Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity (plsephilly.org), headed by attorney Michael Lee. PLSE conducts expungement clinics around the state to assist individuals and local bar associations in navigating the expungement process. PLSE is also an advocacy organization that is working to expand the types of offenses that may be expunged.

It is estimated that 3.8 million Pennsylvanians have criminal records. For individuals who have been arrested but not convicted of a crime, or those convicted of summary offenses, the expungement process offers a path to removing harmful information from public view. Indeed, expungement is more than a path: it is a legal right that should be accessible to every qualified citizen in the Commonwealth. Fortunately, there are resources in central Pennsylvania to assist in reaching this goal.

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CHECHYNA: Impossible to be an openly LGBT person From page 8

we would still condone it."

One gay Chechen man who was interviewed for the same story talked about how he escaped Chechnya, afraid for his life. Despite conducting the interview after escaping, he didn't use his real name and did not want to show his face on television. The man shared that he has a wife and children back in Chechnya. He left without telling his wife what was happening; as far as he knows, she still thinks he's on a work trip elsewhere in Russia.

The man emphasized the point that even though the conditions are so bad in Chechnya, it is still difficult for persecuted gay and bi men to leave because that means making the painful choice to never see one's family again. This point about a family begs the question of what women are experiencing in Chechnya.

A 2011 report from Human Rights Watch called "You Dress According to Their Rules"–Enforcement of an Islamic Dress Code for Women in Chechnya gives some insight into the harsh government control over women's bodies there. This report details accounts of women being assaulted with paintballs for not sufficiently covering up to satisfy the local dress codes. It seems that Kadyrov's guards were the ones attacking the women who were interviewed.

Of course, at least some Chechen women are lesbian, bisexual, and transgender, and it stands to reason that, with the reports of violence against gay and bisexual men, one could safely assume that other LGBT folks in Chechnya also fear violence and experience it.

A spokesperson from the Russia LGBT Network addressed the topic of these populations recently:

"Of course there are lesbians and transgender people in Chechnya like in all parts of the world. Gay men who are taken to prisons, it was a kind of massive attack against those homosexual people. Homosexual women are treated differently. So it's considered that families should take responsibility for them, so there is a lot of domestic violence and we've heard there are a lot of honor killings of those lesbian women."

In some cases, gay men and lesbians have married to stay hidden. In other cases, men who may or may not identify as gay but are having sex with men, while being married to women and having children. This is not uncommon in the world, but its prevalence in Chechnya, and the connections it creates for gay men in the community, is a challenge in terms of the Russia LGBT Network being able to help people flee. And when men in this circumstance do flee, their wives have in some cases faced repercussions as a way to punish the man.

One gay man who spoke with a Network representative said, as repeated by that representative: Talking to you will cost me my life. Keep on telling this story so my life is not wasted in vain.

Masha Gessen, far left, leading a discussion of Russian LGBT advocates June 24 during NYC Pride Weekend. Panelists are from the Moscow Community Center. They are communicating to an overflow audience through an interpreter, far right. A small delegation of Chechen and Russian gay men were also in the audience but for security purposes remained out of view of cameras or recording devices.

CENTRAL VOICE PHOTO

ATTENDEES HESITANT TO SPEAK OUT

Pride & prejudice

Pride events are held amidst mounting challenges from the Trump administration

By Frank Pizzoli

As the region ramped up for the July 29 Pride Festival of PA, two days earlier President Donald Trump announced three actions thwarting recent advances made by the LGBT community.

At the event, held along the banks of the Susquehanna River in Harrisburg, attendees said about his actions, "Thank you President Trump for bringing the LGBT community together."

July 27 began with Trump tweeting that transgender individuals could not serve in the US Armed Forces "in any capacity".

Also announced July 27 was that the day before the US Justice Department intervened in a private employment lawsuit, arguing that the ban on sex discrimination in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 does not protect workers on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Finally, on July 27 Trump announced his nomination of Sam Brownback, the governor of Kansas and a vocal opponent of gay rights, to be the nation's ambassador at large for international religious freedom.

Administration officials called the timing of the three actions "coincidental"

At first attendees were reluctant to put their reactions on record. Not until the ninth person – or organization – asked by *The Central Voice* to comment on the week's events did someone, literally, step up to the microphone.

"I think it is certainly challenging. All of our fears seem to be coming to light. We've fought really hard to be where we're at but unfortunately we're starting to see some it unravel which is certainly a challenge," Harry Young, president, Central PA Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, told CV.

"For us as a community, we've just got to stick together. To continue to fight for advances we've already made and some of which we've lost already. We need to remain united," Young said.

Later, one local person who had initially declined comment said, "It's tiring. Trump doesn't stop. Whether it's gay issues or other things, he makes worn out out," she said.

"It's been an utter disaster. I think it shows how Trump has no interest in serving the LGBT community at all," Harrisburg City Councilman Ben Allatt said.

"What's happening across the coun-

Please see **PRIDE**, page **26**

CONFRONTATION: Peaceful to provocative

From page 12

and Lindsey Lughes, the center's Youth Programs Director also attended the meeting.

Social media descriptions of the incident used words like 'unconscious' to describe Cassidy. While Notario confirmed that an EMT was called to the scene by the Capitol Police to examine Cassidy, there was no ambulance called.

Within hours of the incident, blog RagingChickenPress.com referred to 'charges pending' against the 'Pulse' sign carrier. "That could not have been known at the time it was posted," explained Notario.

If there's a sequence of events frothing over with drama, this is it.

Notario wanted to dial down emotions, thus her arranging a meeting with Capitol Police. "It was a very positive meeting, Notario tells *The Central Voice*.

One significant outcome was a realization by both parties that as many times as the LGBT Community Center or other LGBT groups have received permits to gather on the Capitol steps, neither side really 'knew' each other. "We realized that we were going to be back in the future. We needed to have a dialogue with the Capitol Police," Notario said.

Understanding the rights and rules

Understanding each other and how a permit and its rights and responsibilities work is paramount to safe events which preserve everyone's First Amendment rights. For example, the center group learned :

- That since the center was the organization holding the event permit they could have requested the 'Pulse' sign man leave the officially designated rally area. He could have been asked to convene across the street.
- It is not an infringement of free speech to ask an unaffiliated individual or group who has entered a 'permitted' area of an event to leave the permitted area. Capitol Police, according to Notario, had no idea on the day of the event who was who, except that the center held the permit.

Moving foward

"We're working with Silent Witness to hold trainings on how to peacefully demonstrate," Notario explained. Silent Witness is a local group that has historically provided safe barrier protections between LGBT and anti-gay groups. They are a regular presence at regional Pride and other events where disparate opinions may be expressed. The 'rainbow umbrella' people try to insure all parties present have safe space to express their views without putting each other in any physical danger.

Notario concluded that as a result of the incident and the meeting, Capitol Police "didn't see us before and, after the meeting, I feel like they know who we are."

Memorials and monuments

Making Sense of Life

By Dr. Terry Drew Karanen

Are we destroying history? Monuments and statues symbolizing the Confederacy are being removed from public view in the United States at an increasing rate. Doesn't this deprive our citizens of the memory of people who deserve to be remembered?

No.

Those protesting the removal of these monuments and statues have confused a monument with a memorial.

Slavery and racism is not something to be celebrated. The monuments and statues in question glorify the murders, persecution and racism committed upon blacks and other non-white, non-Christian, non-heterosexual groups. They are monuments to racism, hatred and, ironically so, un-Christian acts by those who would claim to be followers of Jesus.

There is no glory is their acts. There is no reason to celebrate they they did.

As Rashid Robinson from Color of Change wrote on August 13, 2017, "White supremacists killed someone in Charlottesville yesterday. Friday night they marched through Charlottesville and the University of Virginia grounds, carrying torches that evoked a history of violent racial terrorism intended to intimidate a community that had recently renamed Robert E. Lee Park to Emancipation Park. It is past time that we nationally stop the veneration of people who committed treason in the name of slavery!"

"Hatred, racism, prejudice and bigotry are not inherent. They are taught, usually by religions or governments..."

White supremacists want to (literally) "white-wash" our history. Educators from this camp wish to rename slaves as "servants," pretending the horrors of the slave trade never existed. The same has been done to the Native American indigenous populations for the past two hundred years, venerating whites while vilifying the conquered peoples who resided here before the European invasion. Recent immigrants and citizens of the United States, particularly in Hispanic or Muslim communities, continue to be objects of hatred by this same type of people.

American could well look to Germany as an example of how to remember history. Yes, there are Neo-Nazi groups in that country who continue to protest the remembrance of the Holocaust. But the country uses their memorials as a teaching tool to education the new generations of their past, vowing to never again engage as a nation in such deplorable actions.

Americans should do the same.

I belong to an organization with a desire to help foster "A World That Works For Everyone." Sadly, one of my own colleagues, who apparently doesn't agree with the organization promoting this, publicly taunted another colleague about recent white supremacist actions. "This is what you get in 'A World That Works For Everyone,'" he wrote.

No. It is not.

It is what you get when groups and individuals promote a testosterone-driven, "I have to be right (literally) and you have to be wrong," attitude. A world that works for everyone means that everyone in the world would never do anything that would harm others. It would mean that we would be willing to accept the truth and the facts, not continue to harbor prejudice, bigotry and hatred because it suits our own beliefs.

We are not there yet, but we are moving closer every day! This is NOT the time to be cowering in the shadows. People throughout the world are bombarded with bad news from both reputable and non-reputable media sources. But, there are also thousands of great stories out there of hope, love, compassion and cooperation. Promote these. Post these!

Hatred, racism, prejudice and bigotry are not inherent. They are taught, usually by religions or governments, or in so many cases, a collusion of the two. Muslims and Hindus lived together in peace in many places in India, until the British Empire created modern-day India and Pakistan. The "Dark Ages" were produced by a union of State and Church – the land barons provided safety in this life; the Church in the next life – which produced a very rich State and Church, and poverty for all others.

These are exciting and amazing times in which we live. Never before have we as a species been faced globally by a life-threatening situation that we can do something about. This is the time to stand up for peace, for cooperation, for love, and for understanding. It is the time to support leaders who can move us forward into a better world.

It is NOT time to sit around bitching, moaning, and complaining about what "they" should or shouldn't be doing. And, there is one leader we need to support without fail in this effort for world peace. Who is that?

Look in the mirror. It's up to *you*.

Terry Drew Karanen is an author, speaker, licensed social worker and flight attendant. Read his weekly blog at Central Voice online or on his website at: blog.terrydrewkaranen.com. He is also the director of Spirit, Mind and Body Foundation (spiritmindbodyfoundation.org).

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PRIDE: Speaking out about the Trump White House

From page 25

try is despicable and we need to elect folks who better represent us," said Andrew Guth, representing Stonewall Democrats, a local political organization.

"President Trump said he would be the best friend the LGBT community ever had. His actions from Inauguration Day until this moment have indicated anything but that," Joanne Carroll, president, TransCentralPA told CV. Carroll is a 20-year Air Force veteran.

"President Trump said he would be the best friend the LGBT community ever had. His actions from Inaguration Day until this moment have indicated anything but that."

Joanne Carroll, President of TransCentralPA and a 20-year Air Force veteran

"Yesterday was this administration's anti-LGBT day," James D. Esseks, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender & HIV Project, told the New York Times. "Whether coordinated or not, to have it all happen on the same day certainly brings into focus the profoundly anti-LGBT agenda of this administration."

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, a socially conservative and Christian group, applauded Trump's decision to bar transgender people from the military. Perkins, who has blamed extreme weather on the advancement of gay rights, recently had his home destroyed by the massive flooding ravaging Southern Louisiana.

Regarding the Justice Department challenge to employment protections, the Equal Employment & Opportunity Council, under the Obama Administration, sometimes said Civil Rights Act's ban on sex discrimination should be interpreted as including protections based on sexual orientation. Disagreeing, the Justice Department submitting a legal brief into a private court case declaring that courts should not extend that protection to gays and lesbians.

Sam Brownback, now the nation's ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, is a longtime opponent of gay marriage. As a senator, he pushed for a federal ban on same-sex marriage, and in 2015, as governor, he signed a broad executive order in Kansas prohibiting the state government from acting against religious groups that refuse to provide services to gay people.

"Yesterday, he went after everyone with a direct assault. He truly declared war on our community," said Chad Griffin, the president of Human Rights Campaign. "I promise you, this is a battle we are going to win."

In a new political offensive, including Pennsylvania, Human Rights Campaign (HRC) recently announced a proactive grassroots expansion called HRC Rising. "We will accelerate progress in states from coast-to-coast, resist the politics of hate, fight anti-LGBTQ legislation, and fuel pro-equality candidates and initiatives," Griffin said.

"Our progress can easily be reversed. We cannot take anything for granted," Brad Martin told CV. He is president of Pride Festival of PA. "Even so, we must be a community that gathers to celebrate what we have accomplished. We must celebrate and appreciate each other."

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